

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-06

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TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

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S E C R E T STATE 039096

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, PFOR, TU, US

SUBJ: OPIUM POPPY BAN: CONVERSATION WITH TURKISH AMBASSADOR

ESENBEL

FOR AMBASSADOR MACOMBER FROM DAVIES

1. AT EMBASSY LUNCHEON FEBRUARY 24 FOR VISITING GROUP OF
TURKISH PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS, I HAD OPPORTUNITY FOR
EXTENDED EXCHANGE WITH AMBASSADOR ESENBEL ON TURKISH POPPY
PROBLEM.

2. I TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT WE HAD SENT A DETAILED ACCOUNT
OF OUR EXCHANGE OF FEBRUARY 22 TO THE SECRETARY, AND WE HAD
NOW BEEN ASKED FROM LONDON TO SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH
AMBASSADOR MACOMBER REAFFIRMING THE CONCERN FELT ABOUT
POSSIBLE REVERSAL OF TURKISH BAN AND URGING CONSULTATIONS

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BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS.

3. AMBASSADOR ESENBEL SAID HE FELT THAT EARLY DISCUSSIONS EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT IF PROBLEMS NOT TO ARISE BETWEEN US. I NOTED THAT HIS ADVICE TO FOCUS ON ECONOMIC RATIONALE SUCH AS YOU USED WITH PRIME MINISTER RATHER THAN ON LEGAL ASPECTS SEEMED SOUND. PROBLEM, I THOUGHT, WAS NOT THAT FARMERS WHO FORMERLY GREW OPIUM WERE POOR BUT THAT MOST TURKISH FARMERS WERE POOR, SOME OF THOSE IN THE FORMER POPPY AREA WERE PARTICULARLY POOR, AND TURKEY NEEDED A PROGRAM FOR EXPANDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ACROSS THE BOARD. ESENBEL SAID THAT THIS WAS THE ANSWER AND THAT TO PRESS THE POINT THAT TURKEY WAS BACKING AWAY FROM AN AGREEMENT WOULD ONLY BRING FORTH ARGUMENT THAT ACT OF MILITARY-SELECTED ERIM GOVERNMENT CANNOT BIND SUCCESSOR ELECTED GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS STRONG ATTACKS AGAINST ERIM PERSONALLY. WHILE AMBASSADOR AND I KNEW ERIM WAS MOTIVATED ENTIRELY BY CONSIDERATIONS OF TURKEY'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ITS INABILITY TO CARRY OUT COMMITMENTS UNDER THE OPIUM CONVENTION IN MAKING HIS DECISION, PROPONENTS OF A CHANGED COURSE WOULD CHARGE THAT HE KNUCKLED UNDER TO US PRESSURE TO DETRIMENT OF INTERESTS OF TURKS.

4. I UNDERLINED AGAIN THE REVERSE IMPACT A REVERSAL OF BAN WOULD HAVE ON CONGRESSIONAL AND PRESS ATTITUDES AND AFFIRMED OUR INTEREST IN TAKING CLOSE LOOK AT THE PROBLEM WITH HIS GOVERNMENT. CASEY

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